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ROUND TABLE TALKS

THE FARCE CONTINUES

AS PRESIDENT THREATENS 'END OF TAMILS'

'You have such a big majority in Parliament, how come it was not possible to implement a promise given by your President?' Mrs Indira Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, is reported to have asked of Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, the Sri Lankan Minister of National Security, when he recently visited New Delhi.

The 'promise given' by the President to which the Indian PM made reference is what has now come to be known as 'Annexure C', which contained an agreed set of proposals worked out between the Sri Lankan President and the Indian Government in consultation with the leadership of the Tamil United Liberation Front. Annexure 'C 'contained a proposal for regional autonomy for the Tamil areas of the north and east of Sri Lanka.

The 'good offices' of the Indian government and the services of the Indian PM's Special Envoy, Mr G. Parthasarathy, were made available for the All-Party Talks which began on January 20 on the basis of the proposals contained in the Annexure 'C', for a negotiated settlement of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

However, once back in Sri Lanka, under pressure from the hardliners of his own party and the fascist and bigotted sections of the Buddhist clergy, President Jayawardene not uncharacteristically reneged on Annexure 'C' and virtually disowned it.

No serious effort

Since then, the Round Table Conference has been postponed several times, going through appointment of committees and sub-committees but without any serious effort being made by the government to arrive at a negotiated settlement.

The Conference which reconvened on May 9 after a lapse of nearly two months has again been postponed. The reason given for the two-month adjournment by the government was to allow time for legislation to be prepared to give effect to the two items of consensus that the Round Table Conference had arrived at. But when the Conference reconvened, not even instructions had been given to the legal draftsmen to start drafting.

Instead, the government has used the recess to appoint Mr Athulathmudali to the new post of Minister of National Security, and to start a major military offensive in the north.

Although the declared aim of this offensive is 'to flush out the terrorists', its main victims have, by all account, been uninvolved civilians.

Army excesses have given a new dimension to the already complicated problem in Jaffna by involving a section of the Catholic

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STOP PRESS

KIDNAPPED COUPLE FREED

The US couple, Mr and Mrs Stanley Allen, who were kidnapped allegedly by a small group of Tamil youth, on May 11 were freed on May 16 at 8.30p.m. (Sri Lanka time) unharmed and in good health. The couple had been handed over at the Bishop's House, Jaffna. The Bishop was making arrangements for their return to Colombo immediately.

Previously all Tamil political parties, the Tamil Nadu and Indian Governments had appealed for their release. Rev. Fr. A. Singarayer and Mrs Nirmala Nithiyananthan, two Tamil political detainees held by the Sri Lankan government for over a year, and tortured while in detention, also appealed for their release. (See page 2 for editorial comment)

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POLITICS OF KIDNAPPING

As we go to press, we have received reports about the abduction of two US civilians by a relatively small militant Tamil group in the northern Tamil city of Jaffna in Sri Lanka. The couple, husband and wife, were taken as hostages and their abductors have demanded a sum of £1.4 million for their release.

They have also demanded that the Sri Lankan government release twenty Tamil political detainees held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, with an accompanying threat that the hostages would be killed if their demands are not met.

We learn that all Tamil political parties, the Jaffna Citizens Committee, the Jaffna branch of the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality and Rev. Fr. Singarayer and Mrs Nirmala Nithiyananthan (two political detainees held under the PTA) have appealed for the release of the US couple immediately and unharmed.

While endorsing this appeal, we hasten to add that, from any standpoint — political, ideological, tactical, moral, pragmatic, of principle or otherwise — this act of abduction of the US civilian couple is insupportable. And when we express this view, we have no doubt that we are reflecting the views and feelings of the general mass of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.

The Tamil cause

The abduction is the latest instance of a continuing and escalating violence in Sri Lanka spawned by the intransigence of the Sinhala government, its continued failure to recognise the basic civil and political rights of the Tamil people and its uncontrolled use of state terrorism against the people.

Acts of kidnapping and murder of innocent civilians do not serve the Tamil cause; on the contrary they are counter-productive and do irreparable harm to the integrity and justice of the Tamil cause. The irresponsible nature of this act is demonstrated by the embarrassment caused to the government of India and that of Tamil Nadu.

That such adventurist and infantile acts objectively serve only the oppressor is further demonstrated by the fact that it has provided a convenient excuse for President Jayawardene to call in direct US assistance which he has already done by calling in for the intervention of the US 'anti-terrorist' squad. If anyone felt happy about this particular episode, it must surely be President Jayawardene and his government.

The Tamil people have suffered at the hands of murderers and kidnappers. In July-August 1983 last year, thousands of Tamils, including women and children, were killed and their homes destroyed by a planned attack by goon-squads led by well-known henchmen of the Ministers of the Sri Lankan government. When Tamils cried out for help, the Sinhala army and the police not only looked the other way but also joined and participated in the attack.

We know that hundreds of Tamils have been taken into custody and tortured under the infamous Prevention of Terrorism Act, which has been denounced by the International Commission of Jurists in a recent report as containing provisions which are 'a blot on the statute book of any civlised country'.

We know that in the northern town of Chunnakam, on March 28 this year, Sri Lankan Air Force personnel fired indiscriminately and at randam in the market place killing and critically injuring scores of Tamil civilians, including a pregnant woman and a 68-year-old man. We also know that in March and April this year, scores of Tamils were taken as hostages by the Sri Lankan security forces, many of whose whereabouts still remain unknown.

We know that on April 9, the Church of Our Lady of Refuge in Jaffna was bombarded with cannon fire by Sri Lankan troops who jubilantly cried that this was the first opportunity they had to use the cannon in the Tamil areas.

We know that when 50 million Tamils in Tamil Nadu reacted to these atrocities, President Jayawardene, in characteristic kidnapper-style, declared that Tamils in Sinhala areas 'would be slaughtered' if India intervened to prevent the massacre of the Tamils in the North.

Government law-breaker

We know that to the Sri Lankan government, the Tamils living in the South will always be hostages and that it is no longer 'concerned with their lives or their opinions'. We know that the government has sought to secure the support of the US so that it may effectively manage the response of neighbouring India. Yes, we know all that and more.

It was Justice Brandeis of the US Supreme Court who said in 1928, 'Our government is the omnipotent omnipresent teacher ... for good or ill it teaches a whole people by example. Crime is contagious. If the government becomes a law-breaker, it breeds contempt for the law; it invites every man to become a law unto himself ...'

The government of Sri Lanka has been a law-breaker for a long time. Among other things, it has practised kidnapping on a large scale through its security forces which over the years have abducted scores of Tamils, tortured and even killed many of them in custody. The government has also treated the Tamils living in Sinhala areas as hostages; and the ransom it demands is that the Tamil people accept their own national oppression; that they voluntarily submit to national subjugation. And any semblance of resistance shown against such oppression is normally followed by planned and state-inspired violence against the Tamil people and their property.

A government with such a notorious record has no moral

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authority or right to condemn any kidnapping or murder by others. But the Tamil people do not seek to follow the example of the Sri Lanka government. The Tamil people do not intend to emulate the terrorism of the Sri Lankan state.

We know that the government has set a bad example. But it is an example, as a people and as a nation, the Tamil people will not follow. The Tamil people do not seek to gain their freedom by taking away the freedom of others. They do not seek to secure their human rights by denying the human rights of others.

It is in this context that we are impelled to state as emphatically as we can that the kidnapping of the US civilian couple on May 10 does not and cannot have the support of the Tamil people. It was wrong and we say so openly and categorically.

The struggle of the Tamil people is a struggle to be free from oppression and exploitation. It is a struggle for justice and fairness and it draws its strength from the righteousness of its cause. It is the struggle of an ancient people with a rich heritage, a growing culture and one of the oldest languages of the world, all of which they seek to foster, protect and preserve. It is a struggle of a people who stand up before the world and say, 'YES, WE TOO ARE A NATION'. That is what the right of self-determination is all about.

FOR AN INTERNATIONAL INQUIRY

The widespread and unprecedented anti-Tamil violence in Sri Lanka in the months of July-August 1983 in which thousands were massacred and their properties destroyed rendering over 150,000 homeless and destitute raised serious international concern at the time of their occurrence. The international media published reports of atrocities with banner headlines.

The government of Sri Lanka had to concede, in the face of irrefutable evidence, that the violence was pre-planned and highly organised; that the attacking groups had in their possession prepared lists of targets — individuals and properties — for attack; and that they carried out their dastardly deeds according to a set pattern and premeditated plan.

The government also admitted that sections of its security forces not only turned a blind eye, but also in many instances actively participated in the violence and looting. Specifically in two separate instances, in Jaffna and Trincomalee, the security forces went on a rampage killing innocent Tamil civilians and burning their property. Then there was the mass slaughter of 53 Tamil political detainees in the high security Welikade prison in Colombo.

To date, the government of Sri Lanka has not set up an investigation into the July-August 1983 violence. In any other country which claims to be civilised, the government itself would have promptly set up an inquiry in respect of incidents, relatively minor in scale and magnitude.

The Sri Lankan delegate gave the following categorical assurance to the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on August 22, 1983:

'The government of Sri Lanka will leave no stone unturned to identify and bring before the courts all persons responsible for the killings, violence, destruction and devastation. Regardless of who they are, their status, their ideologies and political alignments, the full force of the law and the courts will be applied. There will be no exceptions. At the same time, the government is determined to do everything necessary and possible to eliminate any further recurrence of the sad events.'

Uninvestigated

This assurance, as is usually the case with the Sri Lanka government, has not been kept, and there is no indication the government has any intention of fulfilling its assurance even in the future. In the meantime, those who planned and executed the July-August 1983 anti-Tamil violence, those who carried out the murders and the acts of arson, those sections of the security forces which actively participated in the violence and rampaged through the streets of Jaffna and Trincomalee, killing and maiming innocent Tamil civilians, and those who carried out the mass murder of Tamil political detainees in the Welikade prison continue in their positions of power and prestige uninvestigated and unpunished.

The price paid by those who suffered from the July-August violence is too high for the international community to allow the government of Sri Lanka to neglect, fail and refuse to carry out its duty to institute an acceptable impartial investigation and punish those responsible for the violence against the Tamil people and their property.

The International Commission of Jurists, in their latest Report, released in March 1984, has declared that what it finds 'most extraordinary is that, to this day, there has been no attempt to find out the truth through an official, public and impartial inquiry, when the situation in the country cries out for nothing less.'

The TAMIL RESCUE APPEAL and the CAMPAIGN FOR THE DEFENCE OF TAMIL RIGHTS, two expatriate Tamil organisations operating in Britain, have published a document indicting the government of Sri Lanka as the planner, organiser and the perpetrator of the July-August violence against the Tamils. In fact, the Indictment charges the government with murder, arson, thuggery and intimidation with a view to terrorise and subjugate the Tamil people.

The fact that the government is directly implicated in the violence against the Tamils, the fact that it has so far failed to keep its promise to the UN Sub-Commission in August last year, the fact that one

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A POINT OF VIEW

SRI LANKA AT THE TURNING POINT

From a correspondent

A spectre is haunting the Sinhala people. It is a grim one. In the next 30 years or even less, the natural sovereign unity of the island of Sri Lanka which the British bequeathed with callous disregard for the rights of the minority ethnic groups in the country is likely to be torn asunder by domestic wars fought within the country; they will be wars which will receive active encouragement from the rival power blocs. They will be wars which will probably be fought by proxy by the competing superpowers.

There are three possibilities in the event. The United States will obtain rest and recreational facilities and perhaps even refuelling facilities for their nuclear submarines and their aircraft and their fleets hovering in the Indian Ocean. The question arises as to how India will view this development.

Secondly the Soviets may at last realise their dream of a warm water port in the Indian Ocean. The *People's Republic of Sri Lanka* [emphasis is mine — author] is not a far off goal. The upper crust of Sri Lankan society is not any different from recent examples of the collapse or near-collapse of what seemed at first stable regimes. Balfour's famous dictum 'reform or we perish' is not very popular with pubescent societies in the underdeveloping world.

The third possibility is an Indian takeover. Oddly enough, it may never happen with Mrs Gandhi. But once there is a fragile centre with leaders seeking to distract the popular attention, foreign adventure is invariably the way of diverting mass discontent from domestic problems. An Indian takeover has international parallels in Cyprus and for that matter even within India itself, the occupation of Kashmir, Hyderabad and Goa are the outstanding examples.

CRISIS OF THE PRESIDENCY

There are defects in the 1978 Constitution, the *Second Republic*, as it is called, which could act as catalysts to the process of disintegration. There is also the oft-repeated statement of the 'demonstration effect'. All of these can be catastrophic. The crisis of the presidency in the months of July and Augsut 1983 indicated dangerous lacuna in the constitution.

We have largely, though not wholly, imitated the Gaullist French model. But the Presidents of France acted in manners and styles different from the President of Sri Lanka. Charles de Gaulle rose above the party conflict, talked of the grandeur of France and often thought of himself as France itself. Georges Pompidou did not live long enough but he did not involve himself in the mud and dirt of politics. Major issues like the European Common Market engaged his attention. Others of a pedestrian sort were left to his prime minister.

Valerie d'Estaing glossed over France's petty problems; he did not engage in internecine party warfare even when gravely provoked. And Francois Mitterrand confines himself to the broad headlines of policy. In each instance, the Prime Minister bore his fair share in the day-to-day business of adversarial politics.

Seeks confidence

The point being made here is that the President, once elected, seeks the confidence of *all* the people whether they voted for him or not. The President of France does not go to war with Brittany or Corsica even though there has been sufficient provokation there. Nor did Abraham Lincoln fight a war with another nationality.

Arising from this is the fact of the political culture that emanates from the practices referred to in the previous paragraph. The Pesident of Sri Lanka is an active participant in the political game. He involves himself in commonplace day-to-day controversies. Not so the French President. In fact, the latter maintains a dignified insolence (or aloofness) and Mendes-France, Pompidou, Chirac, Barre and Mauroy have had to bear the brunt of day-to-day politicking.

The involvement of the President of Sri Lanka in controversial issues makes him at once a partisan in party politics which French presidents and even their American counterparts have sought to avoid. The problem in Sri Lanka is that the President combines the functions of an executive head of state as well as most aspects of a prime minister. So, when the President makes pronouncements proscribing the separatist demand and banning parties which advocate such policies — matters which had best be left to Parliament and his prime minister — the situation becomes tricky, especially in a multi-racial state. It does not matter what the President says to assuage the wounded feelings of the victims thereafter; but what he states at first is what matters.

FOCUS OF ATTENTION

The second lacuna in the constitution is the absence of a nominal or constitutional head of state. Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, Governor-General 1953-1962, was called upon by the Prime Minister to handle the grave anarchic conditions of 1958. Mr William Gopallawa, Governor-General 1962-1977, bore some of the blame for putting down the insurrection of 1971. The Prime Ministers as a result were able to avoid some of the blame.

In 1977, 1979, 1981 and 1983, it is the President of Sri Lanka who became the focus of attention. To deal with a JVP insurrection that cuts across community, caste, and religion is not as serious a problem as going to war with a nationality universally regarded by the Sinhalese as their traditional foe. It is a different matter when a President sets himself up as the Commander-in-Chief of the forces that are at war with the Tamil liberation movement. And the movement will probably not confine itself to the Northern and Eastern provinces. The question in some people's minds is whether we are taking a fast train to Ulster and thence to Cyprus.

In a world with wide media coverage, we cannot avoid the practices employed by other non-state organisations (like the PLO). One does not need to go into details, but one can well imagine the island becoming an inferno.

NATIONAL SUICIDE?

And reason ceases where mob hysteria begins. Is Sri Lanka well on the road to national suicide?

This article in some way tries to answer tangentially the question as to what would become of the Round Table Talks. Any intelligent guesswork would have, even before the Talks began, indicated that at least one of the major political forces in the country will keep out of the saving formula that it will support a 'viable solution'. This is poor logic. Why does this force not help in the arrival of an amicable settlement?

On the other hand, this force and its subsidiaries are waiting to say that any agreement that is arrived at will be 'death to the Sinhala race'. It is a platform on which a sweeping victory can be obtained by a candidate of a coalition.

And what of the Tamils? One policy would have been to obtain a little now and more later. But you cannot pursue this line

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of action. You must listen to the sitting-room gossip in the fashionable boudoirs and salons of Bambalapitiya, Kollupitiya, Colombo 7, and even to the billingsgate spoken in the local fish markets. This is a war to the death. The Tamils, they say, deserve no quarter.

The idea of a Round Table Conference solving the problems that confront the island can only be a convivial get-together. No Round Table Conferences solved anything. The Round Table Conferences of 1930 and 1931 between Britain and the Indians failed to produce worthwhile results except for a fast by Gandhi on the 'vivisection' of India. Even this fast unto death undertaken by Gandhi failed. So did the successful death fasts accomplished by Irish prisoners. These did not achieve anything. Only Potti Sriramulu in Andhra succeeded.

The Sinhala leaders will have to offer something tangible which the Tamil leaders will be able to put across to their people. But for this to happen there must be a change of heart on both sides, not only among the electors, but among the bureaucrats and the political elites. There is no evidence of such a transformation. We are enjoying a short period of calm before the tornado engulfs us.

FAILURE OF PAST METHODS

It is to the advantage of the Sinhala elites to maintain the island as a single sovereign entity. This cannot be done by political chicanery, by 'stealing' Tamil leaders elected on one ticket to become showpieces of the government so that the whole will be impressed by this window-dressing. The past has indicated that these methods failed. If anything they aggravated the situation. Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva's election to the Board of Ministers only made the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress more determined. G.G. Ponnambalam's acceptance of office in the government of D.S. Senanayake was one reason for the birth of the Tamil Federal Party. Mrs Bandaranaike's refusal to negotiate with the Tamil Federalists and her alliance with Alfred Durayappah and C. Kumarasuriar, was, among other more grave political blunders, responsible for the formation of the Tamil United Liberation Front.

Given the abject failure of these tactics, the Sinhala political elites have a few limited options available to them to save the island's imminent disintegration. If there is a fragile unity today, it is enforced by terror and military brutality. The military in fact realise that only a political solution can save the day.

The District Development Councils were a breakthrough but they failed because ministers were unwilling to devolve powers, the finances were not forthcoming and the Colombo-centred Sinhala bureaucrats were determined to sabotage the scheme from the beginning. In the end the Tamil United Liberation Front obtained what M.A. Jinnah in a different context described as the CR formula, which was an eleventh hour and fifty-ninth minute effort by C. Rajagopalachariar to save the unity of India. Jinnah called it 'a maimed, moth-eaten and truncated Pakistan'.

QUEBEC EXAMPLE

An alternative is the sovereignty association that the Parti Quebecois of Rene Levesque has advocated for Quebec. In short, it is a customs and monetary union with Ottawa. In all other matters Quebec will be a sovereign state. To advocate such a course cannot be construed as a violation of the Sixth Amendment. And the subjects need not be confined to customs and finance. Defence, communications and foreign policy can be under the control of Colombo.

A third possibility is a confederal system which provides the Tamil areas with maximum autonomy. It could be a modified version of the Parti Quebecois's position. It can be similar to the CR formula which tried to avert the reality of Pakistan.

Still another course will be to transform Sri Lanka into a federal set-up. Many Americans have asked why this cannot be done. A demand on these lines could win world sympathy.

To argue that there are more Tamil people in the Sinhalese areas is a spurious one. There are more Moslems in India today than there are in Pakistan. There are more Albanians in Serbia (Yugoslavia) than in Albania. There are three million Irishmen in Britain. There are no racial stereotypes of majority groups killing members of the minority ethnic groups. The Sinhalese could behave no differently from the Indians, the Serbs or the British once they have to live in peaceful co-existence with non-Sinhala races.

Unitary set-up

The most objectionable is to maintain the present unitary set-up which provides unadulterated supremacy and power to a Cabinet of pan-Sinhala ministers (the Tamil ministers are powerless).

The continuance of the status quo is a sure guarantee of the break-up of the unity of the artificial state of Sri Lanka. To achieve a compromise on the lines stated above calls forth for statesmanship. That seems to emanate from the one incumbent who occupies the presidency today. Although President Jayawardene has been incorporated into the current vocabulary of Tamil demonology, few Tamils realise that after him, there will come the deluge. Then we will have a compounding of Ulster, Cyprus, Beirut and Lebanon. And would not the superpowers dearly love to fish in troubled waters?

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IATA

'TERRORISTS' WHO ENGAGED JR'S PSYCHOPATHS AT WAR!

From our Jaffna Correspondent

In the absence of elected representatives for the Tamil-speaking areas of Sri Lanka (the whereabouts of the Tamil MPs who have been locked out of Parliament is not known, barring Mr A. Amirthalingam issuing statement after statement from Madras, and Mr M. Sivasithamparam sweating it out over the same exercise), the Jaffna Citizens Committee has come to the fore and has had the courage of conviction to do what one would have normally expected from the political leadership.

In the aftermath of the rape of Jaffna from April 9th to 12th, they moved into the people to make a survey of the damage done. The 'Eela Nadu' newspaper also threw its columns open, free of charge, to carry details and even photographs of people dead or missing, following the rampage of the khakied psychopaths of the Sri Lanka security services.

Up to April 26th, 78 people have been listed dead or missing. The following are the details:

APRIL 9, 1984

1. **Mr Mahadeva**, 50 years, survived cancer, heart attacks and diabetes; ardent devotee of Saint Sai Baba; employee of Insurance Corporation of Sri Lanka, shot down at entrance to his office.

2. **Mr Selladurai, a Mason, shot at Chundikuli.**

3. **Mr Duraisingam**, employee of Ceylon Transport Board (Northern Region) shot at Jaffna bus stand while on duty.

4. **Mr T. Yogarajah**, dumb since birth; shot at the entrance of the ice factory belonging to the Fishermen's Co-operative in the North.

5. **Unidentified person**, shot from a helicopter at Sinna Kadai (Market), Jaffna.

6. **Unidentified person**, shot from a helicopter at Cey-Nor (Norwegian Aid) factory.

7, 8. **Two unidentified bodies**, found burnt inside a car at Sundaralingam garage, adjoining the Buddhist temple in Jaffna.

9. **Mr P. Asaipillai**, an employee of the Ceylon Railway, shot at the Jaffna Railway station.

APRIL 10, 1984

10. **Mr S. Ponnambalam**, 62 years, retired office assistant at the Attorney General's Department and Secretariat, Jaffna, employed as Secretary of the Central Nursing Home, Thinnaiveli, Jaffna, shot at the entrance to his home.

11. **Mr V. Paramanathan**, Kandarmadam, Jaffna

12. **Mr V. Paramakandanar**, a prisoner, shot at Jaffna Police Station.

13. **Mr K.D. Vilvarajah**, shot at Stanley Road, Jaffna.

14,15. **Mr N. Rajadurai and Mr Kulandaivel**, both shot at Wellington Theatre junction, Jaffna.

APRIL 11, 1984

16,17. **Mr P. Dharmalingam and Mr K. Rasiah** (62 years), schoolteachers, shot at Neeraviady, Jaffna.

18—21. **Mr Masilamani, Mr Thayalan and two others** shot at Anaipanthy, Jaffna.

22. **Mr M. Mahroof**, a Muslim, shot at Navalar Road, Jaffna.

23. **Unidentified person**, shot at Navalar Road–K.K.S. Road junction, Jaffna.

24. **An employee**, name not known, of James Garage, shot at Point Pedro Road–Victoria Road junction.

25–31. **Seven dead bodies** found on Rasavinthodam Road, Jaffna. (Names not known)

32–35. **Four partly charred dead bodies**, unidentified, found at the railway crossing on Navalar Road, Jaffna.

36–49. **Fourteen partly charred dead bodies**, unidentified, found under the culvert adjoining the Buddhist temple in Jaffna.

50–51. **A man and woman** going double on a push cycle at Kurumbachitty, nine miles away from Jaffna, shot dead.

52. **A man** shot dead at Irupiddy, seven miles away from Jaffna.

APRIL 12, 1984

53. **Mr Nallanathar alias Kulandhai**, driver of car no.CN4203, shot dead and burnt with car at Kokuvil, just outside Jaffna.

54. **Mr V. Ambalavaner**, 43 years, shot at Kokuvil.

55. **Mr Christie James**, from Gurunagar, Jaffna, shot near the Buddhist temple.

56. **An unidentified person**, found shot dead on Stanley Road, behind the Railway Department, Jaffna.

APRIL 24, 1984

57–62. **Six decomposing dead bodies**, unidentified, washed ashore on the sea beach, Jaffna.

63. **Mr Sebastian Sundararajan** alias Illango, shot at Gurunagar.

MISSING

64–69. **Six Muslim youths** from Jaffna.

70. **Mr Vasanthakumar**, Urumpirai.

71. **Mr Gunaratnam**, Urumpirai.

72. **Mr Navaratnarajah**, Atchuvely.

73. **Mr Jeyachandran**, Punnalai Kadduvan.

74. **Mr Ketheeswaran**, (from Trincomalee).

75. **Mr Masilamani Kathirgamathamby**, Anaicottai.

76. **Mr Jesudasan Anton**, Gurunagar.

77. **Mr Viswalingam Sivarajah**, Erlalai.

78. **Mr Jenarat Jenito**, Chavakachcheri.

This list is by no means exhaustive. A greater proportion of the bereaved might not have volunteered information either due to grief or fearing reprisals.

TAMIL TIMES

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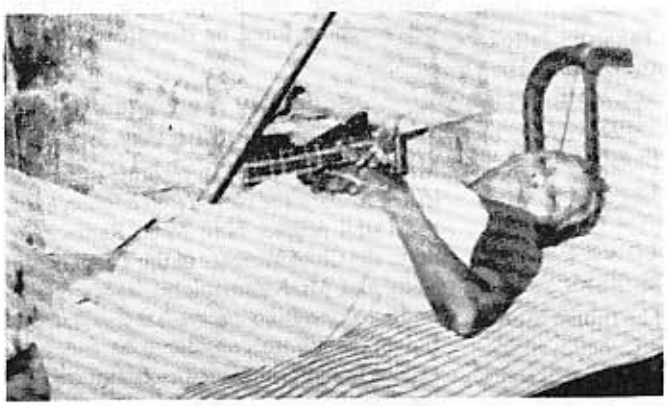
MURDERS MOST FOUL

LALITH ATHULATHMUDALI'S MAIDEN HARVEST OF TAMIL LIVES

Upon his appointment on March 23 as Minister of National Security, Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, proceeded to the northern Tamil District of Jaffna and exhorted the Sri Lankan security forces to 'do their duty'. They responded most willingly in characteristic style by murdering, in one single act of a shooting spree, over 25 and injuring over 50 Tamil civilians, including women, on March 28 at Chunnakam. The pictures appearing on this page give the lie to the claim of the Minister that those killed were 'terrorists'.

Since March 28, over 250 Tamil civilians, including women, have been killed by the security forces.



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SRI LANKA & THE INDIAN SCENE

Send Indian troops to Sri Lanka — Lokh Sabha members

NEW DELHI, March 29: Mr Raa Anbarasu, Indira Congress member of Parliament today demanded in the Lokh Sabh that the Indian Government should move its Air Force and Navy to Sri Lanka immediately to save the Tamils from massacre.

Members of the Indira Congress (Tamil Nadu), Janata and DMK, staged a walk-out from the Chambers when the Speaker disallowed a resolution on Sri Lanka to be taken up for a full debate.

Madras law students storm Sri Lankan mission

MADRAS, March 29: Students from the Law College, Madras, marched in on the Sri Lankan mission in Madras in a wave of angry protest at the massacre of Tamils in Jaffna. Their attempts to invade the mission were prevented by the police.

Uproar in Tamil Nadu Assembly MGR urges Indira to intervene

MADRAS, March 30: The adjournment time of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly saw a deluge of motions by almost all Opposition Parties on the massacre in Sri Lanka.

In an atmosphere charged with emotion, Mr Nedunchezian, Minister in the State government of Mr M.G. Ramachandran, explained that the Chief Minister has already telexed Mrs Indira Gandhi to intervene in Sri Lanka and put an end to the massacre.

'India Today' incinerated

MADRAS, March 31: A demonstration by Indian and Sri Lankan Tamil youth in Madras today culminated in the incineration of copies of the now infamous *India Today* magazine in front of the Sri Lankan mission in Madras. The youth claimed that the *India Today* story describing training camps in Tamil Nadu for Eelam fighters as a diabolical lie and a CIA plant. They also shouted slogans against the massacre of innocent pedestrians by the security forces at Chunnakam, six miles off Jaffna.

Effigies of JR, Reagan set on fire

MADRAS, March 31: Sri Lankan Tamil students in Madras today demonstrated in front of the American Consulate at Madras today, protesting against the aid Reagan's regime was giving to JR's junta for the massacre of Tamils in Sri Lanka. A petition demanding Reagan keep his hands off Sri Lanka was handed over to the American diplomats by the youth.

The angry demonstration then proceeded to set fire to effigies of JR and Reagan, resulting in 12 of the demonstrators being arrested by the Tamil Nadu police. The demonstration is said to have caused two hours of utter chaos at the American Consulate.

Janata—Forward bloc protest in 'Lokh Sabha'

NEW DELHI, March 31: 'The Indian Government must take very serious note of the renewed attacks against Tamils in Sri Lanka,' insisted Mr Subramania Swamy, leader of the Janata Party group in the Indian Parliament, speaking in the Lokh Sabha today.

This matter was also raised by Parliamentarians of the Forward Bloc today.

Indian concern for Sri Lankan Tamils

COLOMBO, March 31: 'India has not failed to express solidarity with oppressed nations all over the world. It is on this basis that India expressed deep concern about the violence against the Tamils in Jaffna,' explained Mr S.J.S. Chatwal, Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, when he met the Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sri Lankan government in Colombo today.

'We are concerned': Indian Home Minister

NEW DELHI, April 3: The Indian Minister of Home Affairs, Mr B.C. Sethi, speaking in the Lokh Sabha, said today that India cannot remain indifferent to what are described as the 'internal affairs' of Sri Lanka. He said that the massacre in Sri Lanka affected even the Tamils who were to be repatriated to India and therefore India had to be concerned.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr A.A. Rahim condemned the anti-Indian hysteria generated by persons in responsible positions in the Sri Lankan government and said that the violence let loose on the Tamils in Sri Lanka has caused deep concern and regret to the citizens of India, in particular, in the Tamil Nadu state.

Raise Sri Lankan problem in the U.N.

NEW DELHI, April 6: Speaking in the Lokh Sabha today, Mr Rasheed Masood, Lokh Dal member of Parliament, urged the Indian Government to sponsor the Human Rights violations in Sri Lanka at the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations. He also urged the government to take steps to protect the lives and property of Tamils in Sri Lanka and also to bring about economic sanctions against Sri Lanka.

'Take other steps' — says DMK

MADRAS, April 6: The Working Committee of the DMK resolved today that with the failure of the Round Table Talks in Sri Lanka, the Indian Government should consider alternative steps to solve the threat to the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Find a political solution — Indira tells JR

NEW DELHI, April 6: The Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has urged President Jayawardene of Sri Lanka to find an immediate political solution to the problems of Tamils in Sri Lanka, it was disclosed in the Lokh Sabha today by Mr Narasimha Rao, Minister of Foreign Affairs. She had also advised President Jayawardene that another outburst of racial riots in Sri Lanka would create inevitable repercussions in India..

Several MPs made a request to the Indian Government to demand that a UN peacekeeping force be despatched to Sri Lanka.

'Solidarity messages' For religious day

MADRAS, April 13: In separate messages issued to mark the New Year ceremonies of the Tamil people, both M.G. Ramachandran, the Chief Minister of the Tamil Nadu state, and Mr Karunanidhi, leader of the leading opposition party, have urged the Indian Tamils to consider it as a day to resolve to fight the atrocities committed on the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

'Send troops to Sri Lanka, or we demand separation' — DMK

MADRAS, April 15: Unless the Indian Government sends troops to save the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the DMK would be forced to resurrect its abandoned policy for a separate state for Tamils in India, warned Mr M. Karunanithy, leader of the DMK at a massive rally held in Madras today. He urged all members of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly to resign en bloc to drive their point home to Delhi.

The rally jointly organised by the DMK, Dravida Kazhagam, Congress (Kamraj) and the Workers' Party was preceded by a long procession.

MP tears up 'India Today' in Lokh Sabha

NEW DELHI, April 15: Indira Congress MP, Mr Chandrapal Chalani, tore up a copy of the *India Today* magazine in the Lokh Sabha today. Another Indira Congress MP, Mr K.K. Dhiwari, refuted the magazine's claim that Tamil terrorists were being trained on Indian soil and berated the magazine for its unpatriotic, treacherous act.

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Several MPs from the Indira Congress, Janata and CP(M-L) demanded a full debate on the massacre of Tamils in Sri Lanka and the Speaker agreed to consider it.

39,394 Tamil refugees in India — Minister

MADRAS, April 15: Mrs Gomathi Srinivasan, State Minister for Social Security, disclosed in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly today that between 28.7.83 and 31.1.84 a total of 39,394 Tamils have fled from Sri Lanka and entered India as refugees.

She also disclosed that the central government has instructed that these refugees should be accommodated in India on humanitarian grounds, till conditions return to normal in Sri Lanka.

JR's 'Destroy Tamils' threat — AIADMK expresses concern

MADRAS, April 16: The ruling AIADMK party of Mr M.G. Ramachandran has expressed concern at President JR's threat that if India intervened militarily in Sri Lanka that would be 'the end' for Tamils in his country.

The working committee of the party which met today pointed out to President JR that Tamils in Sri Lanka were only fighting for their basic human rights.

All Party Conference in Tamil Nadu

MADRAS, April 18: A four-hour discussion took place at an All-Party Conference summoned by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M.G. Ramachandran, to evolve a strategy to help Tamils in Sri Lanka. It was decided to make a final decision after seeking the opinion of three parties which had not attended the confab.

Confab of 17 Opposition Parties in New Delhi

MADRAS, April 17: Seventeen Opposition Parties which met in New Delhi today found consensus in demanding equal rights for Tamils as for Sinhalese in Sri Lanka.

Indira—MGR talks in New Delhi

MADRAS, April 19: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr M.G. Ramachandran, had today an hour-long discussion in New Delhi behind closed doors on the development of the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka.

Indian fishermen attacked by Sri Lankan Navy

MADRAS, April 21: The Ramnad Fishermen's Union has protested about wanton attacks on Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy men who are said to be manning a zone of surveillance in the Palk Straits separating India and Sri Lanka. Its President Mr S. Marimuttu has complained that these attacks have occurred outside Sri Lanka's territorial waters.

International Confab in Delhi to back Tamil struggle

DELHI, April 24: Arrangements are under way to host an International Conference in New Delhi to express solidarity with the struggle of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. It is being said that prominent world figures, including Yassir Arafat of the PLO, Robert Kennedy and prominent international Human Rights activists have expressed willingness to participate.

A secretariat has been set up in New Delhi, supervised by Mr V. Yogeswaran, ex-MP for Jaffna, to prepare for the Confab.

MGR urges PLOT and LTTE to unite

MADRAS, April 25: Mr M.G. Ramachandran, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, said today that he has had discussions with Tamil youth leaders Prabaharan (LTTE) and Umamaheswaran (PLOT) and urged them to forget their differences and unite in the interests of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

He was speaking at a two-day Seminar on Human Rights violations in Sri Lanka, held in Madras.

The Secretary-General of the TULF, Mr A. Amirthalingam, had also made an appeal to all youth organisations to unite.

Speaking further, the Chief Minister advised people like Mr Amirthalingham to return to Sri Lanka and try to unite all the Tamil people there.

He dismissed a Sri Lankan Government claim that Tamil terrorists are being trained in India as fictitious. He also warned the Sri Lankan Government to remember that Sri Lankan Tamils were not orphans and that they were not alone.

International Court should adjudicate on Jaffna violence

MADRAS, April 25: A conference of the World Tamil Youth Council held in Madras today resolved that an International Court should adjudicate on the atrocities committed in Jaffna recently. Resolutions were also passed demanding the Sri Lanka Government release all political prisoners including the women's rights campaigner, Mrs Nirmala Nithiyanandan, who had her confinement in jail.

Big threat to India's security, says Indira

NEW DELHI, April 25: The Indian Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, has expressed grave concern about a security threat to India. The fact that the Indian Ocean is fast losing its image of a zone of peace, spells a great threat to India's security, she added. The Indian people should sink all their differences and unite to work for the welfare of the country, taking into account the great stockpiling of weapons now going on in neighbouring countries, she appealed to the people.

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TRINCO DEAL & THE AMERICAN CONNECTION

In announcing to Parliament on April 5 that the Cabinet had decided to award the oil tank farm at Trincomalee (henceforth to be called the Trincomalee Entrepot Project) to a consortium of **Oroleum (Pvt) Ltd** of Singapore, **Tradinaft** of Switzerland, and **Oiltanking** of West Germany, with the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation retaining 16 per cent of the shares, Minister Cyril Mathew said:

'It is very unlikely, or for that matter impossible, for Sri Lanka to get another group of companies as uninvolved politically, non-controversial, and acceptable technically, financially and commercially as this group to handle the Trincomalee Tank Farm project.' (*Hansard*, col.966)

What the minister did not tell Parliament was that two of the three companies involved are proxies for the former Coastal Corporation, the US firm to whom the government had originally decided to lease the tank farm, but which it had to abandon formally owing to the international and domestic scandal its decision caused.

As was mentioned in earlier articles in *Forward* (which first broke the story) the Cabinet approved on October 7 1981 an agreement between the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation and the Coastal Corporation USA for an oil tank farm at Trincomalee.

For this purpose, Coastal Corporation USA set up a subsidiary firm, which was incorporated in Sri Lanka as Coastal (Bermuda) Ltd, Singapore. The two promoters of this firm were **Douglas Henry Miller** and **Colin Nicholas Refe.**

The decision to award the oil tank farm to the US firm was made without calling for tenders. The amount they had to pay was a mere 25,000 US dollars. But what was much worse was the fact that Coastal Corporation's main customer was the US Navy which was looking for fuelling facilities for its Sixth Fleet in the Indian Ocean.

The exposure of this underhand deal by *Forward* and *Aththa* caused a domestic and later, international furore.

So much so that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was compelled to make discreet inquiries from our Ambassador in the USA, Mr Ernest Corea, about Coastal Corporation Ltd.

Ambassador Corea engaged the prestigious Wall Street firm **Dunn and Bradstreet** to make this inquiry.

This firm reported back that Coastal Corporation was in the red. Its operating loss of 54 million dollars in 1980 had been nearly doubled to 98 million dollars in 1981. Moreover, Mr O.S. Wyatt, its chairman, and Mr Sam P. Wilson, its Senior Vice-President, had been fined 40,000 dollars by the US District Court at Houston for 'criminal misdemeanour in contravening US energy regulations'.

The communication between Ambassador Corea and our Foreign Office also made clear the keen interest of the US administration in this deal.

The US State Department had, he reported, briefed the firm's Chairman Wyatt about the 'sensitiveness' of the deal.

In February 1982, after the CDN reported that the original agreement reached had been called off, Ambassador Corea informed his masters that while the State Department was sensitive to the regional and domestic difficulties Sri Lanka's government may have to face if US naval fuel was given exclusive rights as envisaged in the original agreement, 'the Pentagon might have different views'.

Ambassador Corea also reported the opinion of an Administration spokesman, Murphy, that the ability to store fuel for the US Navy was essential to the viability of the project, and that US trade sources confirmed this.

In the face of this 'stink' the government back-flipped.

It instructed the CPC not to sign the approved agreement. On April 8, 1982 a notice was published calling for 'worldwide' tenders for the oil tank farm.

Seven offers were received, including a new offer from Coastal Corporation.

Apart from the three firms that later formed the consortium that was finally awarded the tender, there were tenders from **Pacific Resources Inc.** USA, **Van Ommeron** of Holland and the **Indian Oil Corporation** of India. On the request of the Sri Lanka government, **Neftchimprom Export** from the USSR also offered to put the 100 tanks back into serviceable condition, set up the farm and hand it over to the CPC for operations.

International furore

While the government was considering what to do, the international and domestic furore over this deal became louder. Its connection with the Reagan administration's geo-strategic plans became obvious and widely known. On top of this, it became known in trade and political circles in Sri Lanka that the offer of the Indian Oil Corporation as the most advantageous to Sri Lanka commercially.

Faced with this dilemma, Coastal Corporation made a new move.

As Minister Mathew put it in Parliament (*Hansard*, col.965):

'Coastal Corporation USA withdrew their offer and Oroleum (Pvt) Ltd of Singapore submitted an offer of a joint group consisting of Oroleum (Pvt) Ltd, Tradinaft, Switzerland, and Oil Tanking, West Germany.'

If the conditions of the original tender were going to be changed so radically and suddenly, elementary procedures required that fresh tenders should be called for. But this did not suit the government or, for that matter, Coastal Corporation and its promoters.

The reason why Coastal Corporation decided to back out was not far to seek.

The Managing Director of Oroleum, which made the new proposals for a consortium, was none other than the same Douglas Henry Miller who had been one of the co-promoters of the original company that Coastal had incorporated in Sri Lanka.

As for Tradinaft, a company with mainly Pakistani capital although located in Switzerland, one of its directors was none other than the other co-promoter of Coastal Colin Nicholas Refe.

Both Mr Miller and Mr Refe were present at the signing of the latest and final agreement in Colombo on April 12, according to the *Island* of the next day. Mr Miller signed for Oroleum, while a lawyer signed for Tradinaft, with director Colin Refe looking benevolently on.

Distinction

It was thus a case of a distinction without a difference. 'Worldwide' tenders had resulted in the oil tank farm being awarded to Coastal Corporation under the guise of subsidiaries.

Mr Mathew has claimed that the new deal would not 'affect the security interests of either Sri Lanka or any other country' (*Hansard*, col.967) because it precludes the foreign investor from renting tanks or storing or supplying oil for military purposes.

Mr Mathew must be deliberately naive. What the agreement actually says is that while the foreign investor is given 'exclusive rights' in this regard, it is only required to 'take all steps reasonably within its powers' to see that oil is not supplied for military purposes.

Recent history abounds with examples of the US government and firms deliberately breaking solemn undertakings.

One of these is the admission of the former US ambassador to Japan that the US regularly brought nuclear-armed ships into Japanese ports for fuelling and service although bound by Japanese law not to do so.

Nor is there any prohibition on the foreign investor leasing out tanks or subcontracting to third parties, who are not bound by these obligations.

Indeed, Article 67 of the agreements gives the foreign investors powers 'which should not be unreasonably withheld' to transfer shares to third parties.

The Trincomalee tank farm issue is by no means settled. All that has happened is a deception.

By courtesy of 'FORWARD', 1.5.84

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ARMY ATTACK ON CHURCH

MINISTER'S STATEMENT – 'TENDENTIOUS, ABSOLUTELY FALSE AND PREPOSTEROUS'

The Bishop of Jaffna, Rev. B. Deogupillai has denounced the statement of the Sri Lankan Minister of National Security, Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, that the church premises of Our Lady of Refuge in Jaffna had been used to booby-trap the security forces, as tendentious, preposterous and absolutely false.

In two letters dated 14th and 16th April, addressed to President Jayawardene, the Bishop has also accused the army of attacking the church on April 9th with cannon fire several times and causing severe damage and that the soldiers had expressed their happiness for having had the chance to use the cannon for the first time in Jaffna and against the church.

The text of the Bishop's letter dated April 14 addressed to the President said:

'I was rather surprised to read in *The Daily News* of Friday, April 13, 1984 on p.11 the following statement reported to have been made by the Hon. Athulathmudali, Minister of National Security, on Wednesday, 11th April 1984: "The Minister said that the terrorists had misused the church to booby-trap the forces. The wire used to detonate the explosives meant to blow up a military convoy had led into the church. The church authorities, who knew the real situation, had made no complaint."

Unpleasant duty

'I have the unpleasant duty **to deny completely** this tendentious statement. The statement refers to the bomb-blast that took

— Bishop of Jaffna

place at about 1.30p.m. on Monday, April 9th 1984 on the Hospital Road, **just behind the church** of Our Lady of Refuge in Jaffna town. It is **absolutely false** that "wire used to detonate the explosives . . . had led into the church". In view of the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Dolours, which was to be celebrated in this church on Friday, April 13 1984, new electric lamp-posts had been recently erected round the church but within the church compound. The main switch of these lamps was inside the church, which is more than fifty feet away from the Hospital Road and separated from it by a parapet wall. The church is usually locked from 12.00 noon to 3.00p.m. **On Monday, April 9th 1984 the church was locked from 12.00 noon as usual by the Parish Priest.** Therefore, **an outsider could not have had access to the main switch of the new lamps,** which is in the church, **at 1.30p.m.**

'It is **preposterous to suggest** that the authorities of the church knew the plan of the terrorists. **The Parish House is in front of the church** and access to it is from another street. From the Parish House, the Parish Priest **cannot see** what takes place on the Hospital Road, which is behind this large church. He did not go out of the Parish House on Monday, April 9th 1984 from 12.00 noon till about 3.30p.m.

'He only heard the blast, shooting on the church and into the closed Parish House and had to lie on the floor to save himself. At about 3.30p.m. he and his companion were taken by two members of the Security Forces to the Hospital Road, the scene of the bomb-blast. After interrogation the Army personnel were satisfied that **the bomb-blast had been detonated from a battery in a car which had been halted on the road.**

'I am really distressed that a senior Minister of your Cabinet has made such a damaging statement, without checking up the facts of the case. If he had consulted the Government Agent of Jaffna, he would not have made such a statement.'

Cannon attack on church

In his letter of April 16th addressed to the President, the Bishop states:

'On Monday, April 9th 1984, the large church of Our Lady of Refuge in Jaffna town was attacked by the Armed Forces of Sri Lanka **with cannon fire several times,** and very badly damaged. The Government Agent of Jaffna, Mr Devanesan Nesiah visited the church on 10th April 1984 and saw personally the vast damage sustained by this church as a result of the attack by the Armed Forces. He would have reported the matter to the authorities.

'They were happy'

'It has been reported to me that the soldiers who used the cannon on this church on 9th April 1984 had said that they were happy that they had the chance to use the cannon for the first time in Jaffna and against this church. Therefore, we have reason to believe that the attack on this church by cannon fire was done **deliberately.**

'Hence, I have the unpleasant duty to lodge a protest against this irresponsible action of the Armed Forces and claim from you **compensation** for the damages caused to this church by the Armed Forces, so that we may undertake **early** the necessary repairs to this damaged church, which is a Parish church constantly used by our faithful. The Government Agent of Jaffna would be in a position to assess the compensation to be paid to us.'

BISHOP CORRECTS REPORT

The Bishop of Jaffna, the Rt Rev. Dr B. Deogupillai, has written correcting the report which appeared in the *Tamil Times* (April 1984) on page 6, entitled 'Facts behind the attack on Naga Vihare and Sinhala school'. The text of his letter to *Tamil Times* is as follows:

'Though the attack on the Church of Our Lady of Refuge in Jaffna town took place on 9th April 1984, and the attacks on Naga Vihara in Jaffna town and on the Sinhala School on 10th April 1984, there is absolutely no truth in the rumour that the attack on Naga Vihara and the Sinhala School was carried out by the Catholics of Jaffna.

'Naga Vihara is situated far away from the Church of Our Lady of Refuge, in the commercial area with completely a Hindu surrounding. The Catholic Church in Jaffna has had no difficulties in the past with the Buddhists in Jaffna. But the people of the North in general have been perturbed by the statements and activities of the Hon. Minister Cyril Mathew, namely, to restore ancient Buddhist Shrines in the Jaffna Peninsula and colonise those places with Sinhala Buddhists. They have been equally perturbed by the President's advice to the Maha Sangha to convert the Tamils of the North and East to Buddhism. Hence, the attack on Naga Vihara was a spontaneous reaction from the people in general. In fact, among those killed by the army at the Naga Vihara there were even some Muslims.

'The Catholics have had no grouse against the Sinhala School, since there is a Government Tamil School for the Catholic children, adjoining the Church compound (This school formerly belonged to the Catholic Church, before the takeover of our schools by the state). Hence the attack on the Sinhala School too was a natural reaction from the people in general.

'The Catholics in Jaffna remained quite calm during the above-mentioned incidents and continued to pray for 'peace and harmony based on justice.'

Editor's Note: We are grateful to the Rt Rev. Bishop for correcting our report. We regret and apologise for the errors.

Our aim for 1984

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SRI LANKA — A MOUNTING TRAGEDY OF ERRORS

ICJ REPORT ACCUSES GOVERNMENT OF SERIOUS VIOLATIONS

Serious violations of the Rule of Law and Sri Lanka's obligations under the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, tampering with the country's constitution for short-term party-political advantage, failure to investigate the July 1983 anti-Tamil violence and the murder of 52 Tamil political detainees in a Colombo top security jail, excesses by the security forces and the government's failure to take action, the draconian character of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the extraordinary powers given to the security forces to dispose of dead bodies without inquests or postmortems, the attack on the judiciary etc., are some of the many aspects dealt with in a 100-page Report recently released by the International Commission of Jurists entitled 'SRI LANKA — A MOUNTING TRAGEDY OF ERRORS'.

MAY 1984
Unparalleled opportunities

The Report, dated March 1984, is the result of a Mission to Sri Lanka in January 1984 on behalf of the ICJ by Mr Paul Sieghart, chairman of Justice, the British section of the ICJ, who according to the Secretary-General, Niall McDermot, 'had unparalleled opportunities to discuss the present situation concerning the Rule of Law and the legal protection of human rights in meetings with President Jayawardene, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Internal Security, the Chief Justice, the Secretaries of the Ministries of Defence and Justice, the Additional Solicitor-General and others. In consequence, he has been able to set out authoritatively the Government's standpoint on many important issues.'

The Secretary-General of the ICJ, in his preface to the Report, states:

'The section of his report dealing with the law and institutions contains a clear analysis and critique of the constitutional provisions for the protection of human rights, the emergency legislation in force, the powers and role of the armed forces and police, and the independence of the judiciary. In particular, certain police powers under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which has now been made permanent, are shown to be a serious violation of the Rule of Law and of Sri Lanka's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The same conclusion is reached in relation to the recent amendment of the Constitution which penalises anyone peacefully advocating separatism by depriving him of the right to be a member of parliament, to hold public office, or to engage in any trade or profession which requires a licence, registration or other authorisation.

'Equally interesting and persuasive are Mr Sieghart's reflections upon the wisdom and efficacy of the draconian measures the Government has introduced to deal, as it claims, with the terrorist activities of the minute organisation of Tamil extremists, the self-styled Tamil Tigers, which the Government itself estimates at only 25 to 30 hard-core members and no more than 100 or 150 on the periphery. He finds some of these measures to be counter-productive as well as being contrary to international law.'

July '83 violence

Having referred to the several bouts of serious communal violence since 1958, the Report notes:

'The intervals between these episodes have become shorter; their extent over the island has become wider; and the violence has become more intense. All these are characteristics of a situation that is getting worse rather than better. Communal riots in which Tamils are killed, maimed, robbed and rendered homeless are no longer isolated episodes; they are beginning to become a pernicious habit.' (page 15)

Referring to the July 1983 violence against the Tamils, the Report states:

'During the communal violence in the summer of 1983 many lives were lost, but so far no one seems to have been able to say exactly how many, and estimates vary widely up to around 400 or even more. It is probable that all of them were Tamils, but again no one seems to be sure. It is not in dispute that 53 political prisoners, all Tamils, were murdered in Welikade jail at that time on two separate occasions spaced two days apart; but although a Magistrate held a formal inquest after each of these events and returned verdicts of homicide, no one is yet able to give an authoritative account of how they came about.' (pages 74, 75)

No forebodings

'But the greatest mystery surrounds the question of how these events in fact started. On the morning of 24 July, many people apparently went about their ordinary business in Colombo, with no forebodings and no expectations of anything untoward. And then, suddenly, the streets were full of goondas, Tamil houses and shops were on fire, Tamil possessions were being destroyed, and Tamils were being killed. Nor was this merely the observation of a few individuals: it is vouched for by the government itself.' (page 75)

'Clearly, this was not a spontaneous upsurge of communal hatred among the Sinhala people – nor was it, as has been suggested in some quarters, a popular response to the killing of 13 soldiers in an ambush by Tamil Tigers on the previous day, which was not even reported in the newspapers until after the riots began. It was a series of deliberate acts, executed in accordance with a concerted plan, conceived and organised well in advance. But who were the planners and organisers, responsible for what they began, and for all its foreseeable consequences in killings, maimings, and loss of property, necessarily followed by a major set-back for Sri Lanka's economy?' (page 77)

Criticising the government for its failure to carry out a public and impartial inquiry to find the truth behind the July 1983 anti-Tamil violence and the murder of 53 Tamil political detainees in the Colombo jail, the Report states:

'But what I find most extraordinary is that, to this day, there has been no attempt to find out the truth through an official, public and impartial enquiry, when the situation in the country cries out for nothing less. After the communal violence of 1977, the present administration appointed Mr M.C. Sansoni, a former Chief Justice, to conduct a wide-ranging enquiry. When an incomparably smaller riot broke out in the London area of Brixton in April 1981, in which much property was damaged and some blood was drawn, but not a single life was lost, the British government immediately appointed a distinguished Law Lord to conduct an exhaustive enquiry into its causes, a task which he accomplished with immense care and punctilious impartiality, taking a mass of evidence, fully analysing all the causes and events, and making many valuable recommendations for their avoidance in the future. So long as no such enquiry is appointed in Sri Lanka, rumours will continue to circulate, suspicion will point to many individuals and groups who cannot all be guilty, divisions between the communities can only be exacerbated, and the Government's task in preserving order, peace and harmony can only be made more difficult.' (page 78)

'Precisely the same considerations apply to the horrific events that took place at the same time within the secure precincts of Colombo's Welikade jail, in which 53 people in the State's custody lost their lives. Here too, there are theories galore, and many individuals and interests are under suspicion. A special team of police officers, under a Superintendent of Police, was appointed many months ago to investigate these events. At the time of my visit, it had still not completed its enquiries, nor did

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the Attorney-General's office even know how far they had proceeded. I have now been told that it has not been possible to find enough evidence to enable anyone to be prosecuted – a proposition which must stretch credulity.' (page 79)

'I regard the appointment of such an enquiry as one of the most important steps for the Government to take in the immediate future.' (page 80)

Observing that the response of the government to the July 1983 violent events 'was scarcely calculated to instil such confidence' in the Tamil people and accusing President Jayawardene of 'a misjudgement of monumental proportions' for his failure to 'utter one single word of sympathy for the victims of the violence', the Report states:

'. . . communal violence began on 24 July 1983. For day after day, Tamils (of both the 'Sri Lankan' and 'Indian' varieties) were beaten, hacked or burned to death in the streets, on buses, and on trains, not only in Colombo but in many other parts of the Island – sometimes in the sight of horrified foreign tourists. Their houses and shops were burned and looted. Yet the security forces seemed either unwilling or unable to stop it – indeed, in Jaffna and Trincomalee, some members of the armed forces themselves joined in the fray, claiming an admitted 51 lives. Seen from the Tamil point of view, either the Government had lost control of the situation, or it was deliberately standing by while they were being taught a lesson. The first massacre in Welikade jail took place on 25 July, and claimed another 35 lives. The second – allegedly foreseen by the prison staff – came two days later, and claimed another 18. Not until the very end of that second episode was a special army unit sent in, to save the lives of the few remaining Tamil political prisoners.' (page 19)

'And not until the fifth day, on 28 July, did President Jayawardene finally appear on television. In a brief address, he blamed the violence and destruction exclusively on the reaction of 'the Sinhala people' to the movement for the establishment of a separate Tamil state, and announced a Cabinet decision to bring in what in the event became the Sixth Amendment, designed the ensure that even peaceful supporters of separatism could not sit in parliament, and that 'those who advocate the separation of the country lose their civic rights and cannot hold office, cannot practise professions, cannot join movements or organisations in this country. (page 20)

'In the course of that address, the President did not see fit to utter one single word of sympathy for the victims of the violence and destruction which he lamented. If his concern was to re-establish communal harmony in the Island whose national unity he was so anxious to preserve by law, that was a misjudgement of monumental proportions: I have yet to meet a single Tamil at any level in Sri Lanka or out of it who does not remind me of this glaring omission at the first opportunity. Nor are they reassured by the programmes for relief and rehabilitation of the victims which the Government has in fact since installed: at the time of my visit, six months later, around 10,000 homeless Tamils are still in refugee camps.'(page 20)

'For months after the violence, the President consistently refused to hold any discussions with the TULF leaders, in or out of Parliament, unless they first formally abjured a separate Tamil State – something they clearly could not do, whether they privately believed in it or not, since they were bound by their party's explicit resolution of 1976 on which they had been elected. Not until after the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Delhi later that year, and some delicate diplomacy on the part of India, did the President finally agree to a round-table conference of all the political parties in Sri Lanka (including the TULF), as well as some other interest groups.' (pages 20, 21)

Emergency Powers

On the use, or rather the abuse of Emergency Regulations under the Public Security Ordinance, the Report notes that they 'confer power on the Executive to arrest and detain suspects without charge or judicial review, to proscribe political parties and to ban publications'. These powers had been recently used to proscribe left-wing political parties and to ban two Tamil newspapers, *Suthanthiran* and *Saturday Review*. 'They also had been used during the earlier Emergency to ban opposition publications, and seal their printing presses, during the campaign on the referendum for the extension of the life of parliament, without a general election, at the end of 1982.' The report concludes that the use of emergency powers to ban opposition publications during the referendum campaign was not justified.

Disposal of dead bodies

Characterising Emergency Regulation 15A (ER15A), which invests the security forces with the power to dispose of dead bodies without inquests or postmortems, as a 'dangerous and obnoxious measure' which 'has (rightly) come under the most intense attack', the Report states:

'It may of course be pure coincidence, but I feel bound to draw attention to the fact that this Regulation was made precisely three days after the Jaffna Magistrate had returned a verdict of homicide at the inquest into the death in army custody on 10 April 1983 of K.T. Navaratnarajah, who died from no fewer than 35 external and internal injuries inflicted by blows and weapons – an incident in respect of which no one has yet been charged.

'On the face of it, such a regulation is an open invitation for abuse. If the Executive can prevent impartial and public inquiries into deaths in custody, or deaths at the hands of the security forces in other circumstances, that could open the way to the worst kinds of extra-judicial execution. But it is also a hostage to fortune for the authorities themselves: so long as such a regulation is in force, it will always be open to their opponents to cite it as an unanswerable demonstration of scandal, whitewash, and cover-up.' (page 42)

Doubting the claim that the approval of the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence was always obtained before the disposal of dead bodies, the Report states:

'Since his appointment on 8 August 1983, he told me, he had conducted only three such enquiries, apart from authorising the burial of 13 soldiers who were ambushed and killed by Tamil Tigers on 23 July 1983. (This is puzzling, as there were also no magistrates' inquests into the deaths of most of the 51 civilians who were admittedly killed by the security forces within the following week.) (page 44)

'I share the view of every other international observer who has so far expressed one on this subject that Emergency Regulation 15A is a dangerous and obnoxious measure, and I strongly recommend that it be revoked forthwith.' (page 45)

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

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CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL ON KILLING OF TAMILS

A two-day conference on violation of human rights in Sri Lanka, held in Madras, South India, on April 21 and 22, appointed a Committee empowering it to set up an international tribunal of justice to enquire into the July-August 1983 anti-Tamil violence.

The conference was attended by delegates from several countries, including Australia, Canada, West Germany and the UK.

Dr David Selbourne of the Oxford University underlined the need for setting up an international tribunal to go into the killings in Sri Lanka. This suggestion was well taken by the other speakers from Canada, Australia and Norway. All of them said the international concern for the Tamils in Sri Lanka should be expressed clearly and vociferously so that there was no place for genocide anywhere in the world.

Dr Selbourne wanted something to be done urgently to relieve the agony of the innocent Tamils in Sri Lanka jails. They should not be allowed to languish in prisons in perpetual fear.

Referring to the remark of the Sri Lanka President that he would continue to preserve democracy in the island, the British journalist said Mr J.R. Jayawardene would do well to pursue a different method if he really believed in democracy. The Prevention of Terrorism Act now in force in the island was the worst of its kind. The denial of human rights to the Tamils offended the rule of law and was repugnant to all basic canons of civil liberty.

Campaign needed: Madam Jayee Yedid of the Bar Association, Quebec, and Amnesty International, said that the happenings in Sri Lanka had not been fully publicised in countries outside the region. Most people in her country knew very little about the problem and considered Sri Lanka a paradise in the Indian Ocean. An international campaign should be mounted to make people understand the seriousness of the problem. Many members of the Tamil community from Sri Lanka, now in Canada, were still to get over the shock of the ethnic violence.

'Bid to wipe out Tamils': Mr V. Yogeswaran said that in the name of sea surveillance and arresting the outflow of Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka to India, armed forces were trying to wipe Tamils out once and for all. Referring to the hope expressed by Mr Rajaram that a stage would come when both the Sinhalese and Tamils would live again as brothers, Mr Yogeswaran said the Tamils and the Sinhalese would indeed live as brothers not in one state but in two separate states.

Immediate withdrawal of the emergency regulations in Sri Lanka empowering the police to dispose of dead bodies without a magisterial enquiry, was demanded in a resolution adopted at the Conference on human rights violations against Tamils in Sri Lanka recently. The regulation had now become a licence to kill at will for the island's security forces, it said.

By another resolution, the Conference called for the immediate setting up of a committee empowered to set up an international tribunal of justice which would independently and impartially enquire into the killings in Sri Lanka during June-August 1983. The committee would collect documents and disseminate information about the events concerning the violation of human rights in Sri Lanka and take all measures which it might find necessary in the light of the findings of the tribunal.

The Conference urged the Sri Lanka Government to release forthwith the detainees or to bring them to trial under the normal law of the land. It pointed out that hundreds of Tamils had been taken into custody and kept in detention for long periods extending in some cases to three to four years without being brought to trial, in violation of all known standards of criminal justice.

The resolution in this regard noted with peculiar dismay the long incarceration of Mrs Nirmala Nithyanandhan, a teacher, writer and women's rights activist, and Rev. Fr. Singarayar and called upon the Government of Sri Lanka to release them forthwith.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Ever since I read David Selbourne's article about Dr Rajasuntharam in 'The Martyrdom of the Tamils' (*Illustrated Weekly of India*), October 9, 1983, I have been wanting to write to you to see whether you could get a group of caring people in the U.K. who could work towards the nomination of the late Rajasuntharam for the next Nobel Peace Prize as suggested by David Selbourne.

It would mean much, not only to Mrs Rajasuntharam but also to the endangered Tamils in Jaffna, and to each one of us wherever we are. I am confident that a group of English friends and well-wishers, not too involved with the nitty gritty of the Tamil question, can do the campaigning for the man who gave his life to serve voiceless and exploited up-country Tamil residents of Sri Lanka.

Yours faithfully,
C. Jeyaratnam,
Victoria, Australia.

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CALL FOR 7-POINT PLEDGE

THE THANTHAI CHELVA MEMORIAL TRUST have invited the Tamils of Sri Lanka to take the following 7-point Pledge on the 86th birth anniversary of the late Thanthai S.J.V. Chelvanayakam which fell on March 31, 1984:

1. We pledge to continue our struggle for the right to our emancipation by our steadfast dedication to Truth and Ahimsa, conquering hate by love, violence by non-violence, cleansing ourselves of racial animosities, true to the authentic ideal of our ancients that 'Every country is my country and every man is my kinsman'.

2. We resolve to work the political and economic institutions in our areas as harbingers of a new political and economic order based on participatory democracy so as to create a truly Gandhian Sarvodaya Society assuring to all, Peace and Justice, Freedom and Human Dignity.

3. Our commitment to create a Sarvodaya Society imposes on us a further obligation in our personal lives to reject the institution of caste and the concept of class and other inequalities, and suggests a code of self-discipline to every one of us.

4. The Sarvodaya Society we are after imposes on us a further obligation to share with our fellow men a simple life-style, with a ceiling on each family's income, the rejection of the dowry system, women wearing the minimum of jewellery, and the adoption, so far as is possible, of the vow of swadeshi.

5. We shall endeavour to re-organise our education, formal and non-formal, integrating in it a system of libraries extending to all villages; not the least part of our education and vocational preparation, the opportunities that disabled children and young persons have are equal to those of non-disabled children and young persons.

6. We call upon our youth to form Shramadana Service Corps and invite local committees to help such service by forming Common Funds.

7. We resolve to conduct both festivals and domestic occasions on a subdued note so long as our goal is unrealised.

We are convinced that adoption of this 7-point Pledge, and its substantial fulfilment, will help to build our moral power by strength from within, and take us far on the road to future peace and prosperity.

Mr K. NESIAH
Chairman

MASS FOR THE MASSACRED

Members of the Thamilar Olli Association of Quebec, Canada, offered a mass on April 29th at St Joseph's Basilica, Montreal, for the repose of the thousands of souls of Sri Lankan Tamils massacred by forces' personnel and Sinhala mobs over the past 28 years. Special prayers were also said for those Tamil stalwarts who have dedicated their lives to establish a land free of fear and oppression and discrimination, not only for the present inhabitants of Tamil Eelam but also for generations unborn.

More information about future events of interest to Tamil people of Quebec and to their friends may be obtained from Edward Joseph, Secretary (Social), 2770 Louis Pare, Apt.301, Lachine, P.Q. H8S 1K8 (tel: 514-634-7658).

'He has chosen me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, and announce the year when the Lord will save his people.'

(Luke. Chap.4: verses 18,19)

HANDY PERINPANAYAGAM MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Handy Perinpanayagam

'The Jaffna University staff were indeed happy to inaugurate the Handy Memorial Scholarship to perpetuate the memory of an outstanding educationist and nationalist in this country, the late Handy Perinpanayagam, whose life and work the present and future generations should be familiar with,' said Professor S. Vithiananthan, Vice-Chancellor of Jaffna University, who accepted a cheque for Rs.30,000 from Mr C. Subramaniam, President of the Handy Perinpanayagam Commemoration Society at a function held at the Jaffna University recently.

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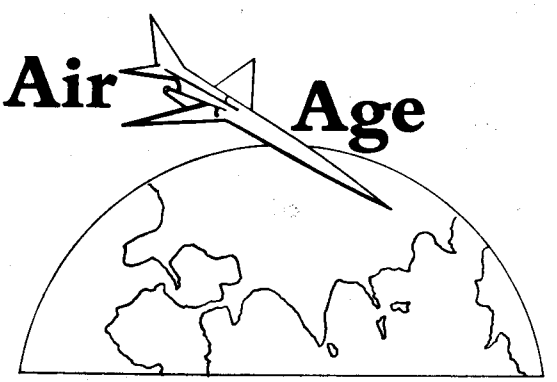

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FROM THE PRESS . . .

THREATS TO TAMIL STUDENTS

Young Tamils from Sri Lanka who are studying in London colleges have been threatened with violence by students from the majority Sinhala community of their home island.

A fight between Tamil and Sinhala students broke out recently at the North East London Polytechnic, people were injured and Tamils' cars were damaged, according to young Tamils.

Threatening notice

One student from the London College of Accountancy said: 'When you leave the classrooms for a break you come back and find a threatening notice on your desk. The same notice was pinned to the board and a lecturer removed it.'

The notice, also circulated at the NELP, reads: 'Warning, you Tamil bastard! Never ever think of returning to our Sinhala land. Sri Lanka for the Sinhalese only! Sri Lanka is the land for the Buddhist, not for the Hindu. The day you return, our brothers will paint the streets with your capitalist blood, and your brainy brain will be given to the dogs.

'Don't think you can hide behind the body of the bloody British flag which reuined our country and gave you such freedom in our holy land. We will have you one day. We are watching you. Burn, kill Tamils!'

The government appears to be responding to calls from Amnesty International, the UK Immigrants Advisory Service, MPs and Tamil groups to stop deporting Tamils to Sri Lanka.

There have been reports that innocent civilians are falling victim to the Sri Lanka army and to police looking for Tamil terrorists, known as Tigers, in the north of the island. Hundreds of Tamils were killed in riots last summer.

(THE GUARDIAN, 3.5.84)

LOSS OF HARMONY

Dear Sir,

As a concerned observer of the political manoeuvrings that are occurring over Sinhala-Tamil relations at the round table talks which the President of Sri Lanka has summoned, I am appalled, less by the pig-headedness of the politicians on both sides who fail to see the need to accommodate the genuine grievances of both communities, than by the chauvinism and intolerance on racial issues and the blocking of an equitable solution by some of the country's Buddhist monks.

Compassion

Buddhism emphasises Maitreya (goodwill) and compassion to all sentient beings.

What is disturbing is that few Buddhist monks have been publicly involved in any effort to restore peace and understanding among the communities. Ironically, again, Sri Lanka history has the story of the Buddha intervening to bring peace among two of its warring tribes. There are learned monks who speak of the pacifist message of the Buddha as a solution for global problems of war and peace. But many of these neglect the positive role they could play by applying what the Buddha taught to the raging indigenous brutalities.

Asoka de Silva
Colombo, Sri Lanka

(From SOUTH, April 1984 — (letters to the Editor)

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TAUT LITTLE ISLAND

Sri Lanka won't get peace by prayer or accident. It needs presidential guts

Paradise cannot sustain a second descent into hell. Sri Lanka, the original Serendipity, incinerated its good name and a good part of its tourist revenues last July in a communal firestorm.

Today the same government which stood by when Sinhalese mobs took knives and torches to their Tamil neighbours, is once again allowing passions to rise. It has been lucky so far that the excesses of Tamil terrorists and of army counter-terrorists have been confined to the Tamil enclave in the north of the island.

But it will take more than serendipity to stop the conflict spreading to the rest of Sri Lanka and even across the Palk Strait to India.

Part of the problem

The one person who can stop this happening is Sri Lanka's President. But these days the venerable Mr J.R. Jayawardene looks less like the solution than part of the problem. At 76, he should be as secure as a politician can be, with a clear run of five more years in the presidency and a parMr Jayawardene himself is no Tamil-baiter. Yet last July and again this spring he showed that he has no longer any stomach for defying the popular (Sinhalese chauvinist) will.

He had a chance to heal communal wounds by doing a deal with the non-secessionists, non-violent wing of the Tamil movement. A draft agreement was worked out last winter with the help of an envoy from India who promised to bring the Tamils along.

The price of peace was remarkably low: strengthening and consolidating the district development councils, which would give the Tamils something of the local autonomy they seek. But under pressure from extremists in his own party and the Buddhist clergy, the President reneged, leaving the moderate Tamils humiliated. The initiative then passed to the men of violence on both sides.

The President has made little effort to rein in the army, which responds to terrorist attacks by mowing down Tamil civilians and burning shops and homes. And he has talked tauntingly and dangerously about an Indian invasion and the mas-

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NO WAY TO TAME TIGERS

The Minister of National Security, Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, went to New Delhi last week to reassure Mrs Indira Gandhi that Sri Lanka was still seeking a political solution to its communal conflict. By all accounts he succeeded, but up here in the Tamil heartland his protestation rings distinctly hollow.

What is questioned is not so much the government's sincerity as its will to negotiate a settlement acceptable to the bulk of the minority population, and the determination to make it stick.

The military deployment in the north has changed beyond recognition. The army is no longer playing soldiers. A company of hard-looking infantrymen, armed with sub-machineguns and barricaded behind a wall of sandbags and old lorry tyres, guards Jaffna airport. Others patrol the town in armoured personnel carriers, and control the Elephant Pass which links the Jaffna peninsula with the rest of the island.

Trains from Colombo no longer go as far as Jaffna. They stop at Kilinochchi, two hours bus ride away south of the pass. The railhead is heavily guarded by soldiers and sailors, and a detachment rides shotgun on the train all the way to and from the capital. The troops arrive at the station in a convoy led by an armoured personnel carrier with a machinegunner watching from the turret.

Short-term remedy

Yet this is far from a military solution either to the Tamil problem, or to the more limited one of terrorism. It is at best a short-term remedy. It will make it harder for the Tigers, in their various ideological splinters, to operate, just as the new maritime surveillance and ban on outboard motors will make it harder to bring in men and arms from south India.

The government will, however, still have to deal with the 900,000 Tamils who live in the north (plus another 900,000 elsewhere in the island). Outside the propaganda of Tamil exiles there is no evidence of a plot to drive them out or to kill them off.

Nor is there any sign that the new tough line is alienating public sympathy in Jaffna from the terrorists, said to number as many as 6,000 under arms or training in Tamil Nadu across the water. The Tigers are still getting shelter, from friends, if not from their families. If anything, last week's military excesses, in which more than 50 Tamil civilians were killed by the army, increased their support.

The Tigers may bide their time, but they have not been tamed. Nonetheless, despite the shootings, curfews and harassment of the terrorists' families, the Tamil politicians have not withdrawn from the round-table talks initiated by President J.R. Jayawardene in January. They are looking over their shoulders at the militants, but they still hope for a lifeline from Colombo.

'If the government think their tactics will turn the Tamil public against the militant youth, they are barking up the wrong tree,' the president of the Tamil United Liberation Front, Mr M. Sivasithamparam, argued this week. 'The opposite is happening. More and more people are getting drawn to the militant youth, looking on them as heroes and saviours. I urge the government to withdraw the army from the Jaffna district as an interim measure and let the police do their normal duty of preserving law and order.'

Little faith

There is clearly no chance that the government will comply. Ministers have so little faith in the local Tamil policemen that they are not even issuing them with arms. Mr Athulathmudali, the President's new strongman, has staked too much on the troops to pull them out. They are in Jaffna not only to cow the Tamils, but to convince the majority Sinhalese further south that the Government is taking care of things.

The Tamil leader confirmed, however, that the TULF would still take its seats when the round-table talks resumed on May 9.

He was cautious in setting out the Tamils' demands, but anxious to keep the door open to compromise. 'Our mandate from the Tamil voters in the 1977 elections was for the establishment of a separate Tamil state,' he said, 'but we have always stated that if the government and the Sinhalese parties offer an acceptable alternative, we shall place it before the people for acceptance or rejection.'

When I asked what might constitute an acceptable alternative, he replied: 'It may be federalism, it may be a great degree of regional autonomy. We would certainly take it to the people.' He would not say in advance, however, whether the TULF would recommend approval. What was not acceptable, was the district councils, with little more power than the present village councils which the government has offered. But President Jayawardene seems to have set his sights against any further concessions.

In an interview with the fortnightly magazine *India Today* the President said last week that he could not introduce the more powerful regional councils demanded by the Tamils because the Sinhalese were against them.

'The TULF says I can solve this,' Mr Jayawardene argued, 'but I can't. I'm stuck. I'm a prisoner, not of any particular group but a prisoner of circumstances, law, the constitution and the political parties. I can't throw my weight about and say: do this, do that. I'm not a dictator.'

That may be correct and commendable, but it is hardly the stuff of statesmanship — or the answer to Jaffna's recurring cycle of violence and repression.

BY courtesy of
THE GUARDIAN, 19.4.84

TRIBUTE TO TAMBIMUTTU IN POETRY, MUSIC AND DANCE

A Memorial Concert for poet Tambimuttu, the distinguished editor of *Poetry London*, who died on June 22nd last year mourned by poets, writers and artists across the world, was held at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in West Kensington before an audience consisting of a wide cross-section of his friends, relations and admirers. It was a symbiosis of poetry, dance, music and song — fine performance of the art forms he specially loved.

The well-known poet Francis Scarfe opened the occasion, reading his very moving 'Elegy to Tambimuttu', followed by a touching and beautiful performance of two of Tambimuttu's songs by his younger brothers Paulinus and Chrysanthus, and his niece Tamara, and one song written by Paulinus himself.

Tradition of sung poetry

Shusha, the Persian singer and songwriter whose renditions of the tradition of sung poetry Tambimuttu loved, gave a performance that would greatly have moved him. The first half of the concert culminated in a vibrant Bharata Natyam performance in the Valluvoor style by Tamil dancer Shobana Jeyasingh.

The famous poet David Gasgoyne, one of many whom Tambimuttu nurtured and encouraged in their early difficult years, opening the second half with a reading, was a very special blessing on the occasion, which was followed by a brilliant performance by Kandyan dancer Vipuli and her troupe, with special guest the famous cellist Rohan de Saram on the Kandyan Drum, combining his talents with hers to present a unique item in the history of the performing arts, as well as an astounding performance on the cello.

At the close of the Concert, Tambimuttu's daughter Shakuntala expressed her gratitude for this tribute to her father by singing a song that he had loved her to sing, a most moving close to the tribute to Tambimuttu that warmed the hearts of all those present.

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FROM PAGE 1

THE FARCE CONTINUES

AS PRESIDENT THREATENS 'END OF TAMILS'

population of the north in the clashes that took place over the New Year. The bitterness among the Catholics can be judged from the statements to Reuters by Jaffna's Roman Catholic Bishop Deogupillai that 'it is the army who is terrorising our people and not the terrorists'.

In addition, a virtual economic blockade of Jaffna by land and sea has come into force.

Food, fuel and other essential supplies are not getting through as lorry traffic has virtually ceased and the trains run irregularly up to Chavakacheri only.

Fish is in short supply as fishermen do not go to sea, fearful of the Navy's new cordon sanitaire. As most of these fishermen are also Catholics, bitterness among this religious community is at its zenith.

Although the curfew is officially only in force in Jaffna's municipal area, it exists in practice all over the peninsula.

Minister Lalith Athulathmudali, who masterminds the military offensive, has been at pains to insist that this does not signify that the search for a political solution has been abandoned, or that the government is once more seeking a 'solution' through military force.

He has argued that this 'flush-out' operation is necessary to make a political solution possible.

But all that the operation has produced so far is needless civilian deaths and the hardening of bitterness among the Tamils.

In the meantime, President Jayawardene is busy keeping the ethnic pot boiling for his own advantage. He joined the anti-Indian lobby, even as his Minister of National Security was on his way to New Delhi for 'talks', and chose to add fuel to the fire by underwriting, in his *India Today* interview, the anti-Indian hysteria that has been whipped up by several of his Ministers and notably by the Prime Minister, Mr R. Premadasa.

When asked whether he agreed with the Premier that India was trying to 'bully' Sri Lanka, the President replied: 'That's what they are trying to do.' (*Colombo Daily News* 16.6.84) In reply to another question, he said: 'I'm not going to be frightened by India.' Mrs Gandhi and India's High Commissioner here 'don't accept what we tell them. They accept only what Amirthalingam tells them.'

JR threatens Tamil annihilation

Asked about the suggestion by some people of signing a treaty with a big country by the *India Today* correspondent, the President replied: 'I am not for it. The worst India can do is to invade us. If they invade us, that is the end of the Tamils in this country.'

While not allaying the artificially created fears among the Sinhala people about an 'Indian invasion' (which Lalith Athulathmudali dismissed as imaginary after his disccussions with Indian leaders in New Delhi), President Jaywardene by this statement also sent shivers down Tamil spines at the veiled threat of genocidal annihilation of the Tamils.

'A racist regime'

This Presidential threat provoked Mr S. Ramachandran, the Tamil Nadu Minister of Electricity, to ask: 'Possibly Mr Jayawardene was clarifying that his government is purely a racist regime. Is he the President of Sri Lanka or the President of the Sinhala race?'

With regard to a political solution through the Round Table Conference or any other form of dialogue, President Jayawardene, the man who boasted that he could do anything but turn a man into a woman and vice versa, mournfully confessed: 'I'm stuck. I'm a prisoner, not of

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any particular group, but a prisoner of circumstances, law, the constitution and the political parties.'

As for Annexure 'C', regional councils or even provincial assemblies, all he had to say was: 'Even if I like the idea, my party may not like it. They are reacting to the attitude of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party.' Or again: 'How can I say I want regional councils when everyone else is against them?'

Dilly-dallying

Despite all the dilly-dallying, the President is determined to keep the farce of the Round Table Conference going, at least until he returns from his visit to the United States where he could pose as a leader and a statesman attempting a negotiated settlement.

Bearing his impending US visit always in his mind, the President returned to his traditional anti-Marxist theme, which would no doubt please the ears of President Reagan.

In a speech he made at a Colombo meeting, he was at pains to emphasise to people in Sri Lanka and abroad that what the 'terrorists' sought was not merely Eelam, but the establishment of a 'Marxist state' in Sri Lanka. He alleged that they received aid from 'revolutionary' forces abroad.

All this was, no doubt, intended for consumption in the US, which President Jayawardene will visit soon in search of aid.

INDIRA ASSURES LASTING SOLUTION TO TAMILS

Mrs Indira Gandhi expressed her determination to find a lasting solution to the travails of the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Mrs Gandhi gave this assurance when an all-party delegation, led by the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr G. Ramachandran, met her for 45 minutes on May 5th to demand immediate steps by the Centre to solve the problem.

Mr Ramachandran and leaders of the opposition who jointly addressed a press conference later, said they were returning to the state with complete faith in Mrs Gandhi's earnestness and will to resolve the intractable issue.

Before giving his assessment of the outcome of the talks, the Chief Minister asked every party leader to give his own separately to the newsmen.

The Tamil Nadu communist leader, Mr M. Kalyanasundaram, said the Centre should take steps to prevent harassment of Indian fishermen in the waters around Arantangi in Thanjavur district and the Palk Straits. He also said that the safety of the maritime routes around Sri Lanka through which merchandise moved to Tamil Nadu should be ensured. Sri Lankan naval vessels were intruding into Indian waters and attacking fishermen.

The CPI leader also said: 'Mrs Gandhi alone can do something decisive.'

Mr Haja Sheriff, leader of the Congress legislature party, said: 'This solution has to be found. The Prime Minister fully shared the concern felt by all of us. She was also well informed about the goings-on in that country.'

He said after seeing the outcome of the next round of the round table talks beginning in Sri Lanka on May 9, the Prime Minister would take some concrete steps.

One of the suggestions made was that the government should raise the issue of atrocities on the Tamils in the Jaffna region at the United Nations Human Rights Commission. She promised to consider it.

At the end of the press conference, the Chief Minister appealed to the press, not only in Tamil Nadu but elsewhere to educate public opinion on the true happenings in that country and the sufferings of the Tamils. So much space was being devoted to highlight the Punjab problem, but not the hardships of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, he said. Mrs Gandhi was assisted in the talks by her principal secretary, Mr P.C. Alexander.

Besides the Chief Minister, those who represented the state were Mr Kalyanasundaram, Mr Mohammed Ismail and Mr S. Karyalar (Lokh Dal), Mr G. Moorthy and Mr Andi Thevar (Forward Bloc) and Mr Kumari Anandan (GKNC).

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FROM PAGE 3

FOR AN INDEPENDENT INQUIRY

of its own Ministers has publicly confessed that sections of the government holding high positions were responsible for the July-August violence, that fact that the government, through its security forces, has killed over 200 Tamil civilians since March-April this year and the fact that the government and the state-controlled media are seeking to cover up these atrocities, taken together, compels us to support the call for an impartial inquiry to be conducted by a team of persons of international repute to investigate the facts and circumstances surrounding the July-August violence.

And the continuing violence in which many Tamil civilians are being killed makes it all the more imperative and urgent that such an inquiry takes place.

OBITUARY

DR RAJAN K. SELLIAH, M.B.B.S.(Cey), M.R.C.P.(Lond), died suddenly of a heart attack on May 4th at the age of 51. He had a distinguished career in Jaffna College where he represented the School in football, basketball and tennis. After obtaining his medical degree from Colombo, he worked for a few years in the General Hospital there, and then proceeded to England where he obtained his M.R.C.P.

On his return to Ceylon he worked briefly in the General Hospital, Badulla, after which he opened his own practice, setting up the Central Hospital, Batticaloa.

He leaves behind his wife, Selvi, three daughters, Prathiva, Prasanna and Praneetha, two brothers, Professor Balan Selliah and Sathi Selliah, and four sisters, Mrs Kamala Alphonsus, Miss Chelvi Selliah (Principal, Uduvil Girls' School), Dr (Mrs) Jeya Edwards and Mrs Packiam Seevaratnam.

Active social worker

Rajan took a keen interest in the life of the community in Batticaloa, being President of the Rotary and of the YMCA. He was also an active member of the Boards of the Eastern Technical Institute and Jaffna College. He was for many years a member of the Methodist Conference and showed his strong Christian belief by his deep concern for the underprivileged of the Eastern Province.

The funeral took place on Thursday, May 10th, at St Marylebone Crematorium, Finchley.

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